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Articles in Today's Clips

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Rally at Capitol draws Medicaid cut protestors

Gongwer News Service

July 20, 2005

Wednesday's rally at the Capitol to halt the proposed cuts to Medicaid brought to mind two important dates to speakers and the more than 600 who showed up to protest.

On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed, stating that all men were created equal and have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Then on July 26, 1990, then-President George H.W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act, prohibiting discrimination in work and public places on the basis of disability.

Both events were the basis of arguments made by the protestors, who spent Wednesday morning in the sun listening to speeches by lawmakers and disability advocacy groups, who were all against the proposed Medicaid cuts in the 2005-06 budget.

As the people spoke and occasionally chanted, other groups sat under a tent and provided an opportunity to register to vote or nominate oneself to serve on a state board or commission. Signs ranged from informative ("I Vote") to alarming ("Cuts = Death") to incredulous ("More Budget Cuts? Why? Where?").

Although 2,000 people had been expected, the lower turnout did not deter organizers from feeling accomplished. Tom Masseau, director of public policy for Protection and Advocacy Services, Inc., said the point of the rally was to make a statement on the proposed budget cuts and show lawmakers a visual of those who would be hurt by those cuts.

"It shows (lawmakers) that people are watching and it gets people to Lansing," he said.

Rep. John Gleason (D-Flushing) told the crowd he understood what it was like growing up in a family with a disabled parent and little medical benefits, as his father had his arm ripped apart by a meat hook when Mr. Gleason was young.

"The people in Lansing are trying to take away the benefits my father fought for," he said.
"That's not the Michigan I want."

Amy Johnson, program manager with the Michigan Rehabilitation Association, said Medicaid funding is stuck in a program that is not working and the cuts would actually cost the state more in the long run.

"If these people don't have their medication, they'll have to go to the hospital or nursing homes, which will cost the state a lot more," she said.

And Sue Hart with the Disability Network in Flint said many people on Medicaid already have trouble paying their bills, and she wondered why it seemed the state planned to cut the funding for those who do not have a voice.

“If these cuts happen, we’ll be out in the 2006 election, and we’ll remember,” she said.

Ms. Hart said lawmakers should think about the future when looking at budget cuts, because she said everybody at some point will acquire a disability, echoing a sentiment by former Rep. Lynn Jondahl that everybody without a disability is only “temporarily able.”

State out of money to prevent poor from losing electricity

By AMY F. BAILEY

The Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Michigan is out of money used to help poor people avoid losing their electricity because they could not afford the bill, the head of the state's social services department said Tuesday.

The state has used up \$117 million from the Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund that comes from the federal government, two-and-a-half months before the Oct. 1 start of the new fiscal year, when the money is replenished, Department of Human Services Director Marianne Udow said.

"We don't have a lot of tricks in our bag," Udow said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press. "We are extremely concerned about this."

This year marks the first since the early 1980s that the program has run out of money, Udow said. She attributed the shortfall to increasing energy costs, fewer federal dollars and a higher demand because of the state's lagging economy and high unemployment rate.

About 975,000 people used money from the program to avoid shutoffs last year, Udow said. Michigan had the second-highest number of people in the program, only behind New York, she said.

Udow said the state has some emergency funding to offset the used-up federal funding, including \$900,000 from a program intended to keep families together rather than putting children into the foster care system. The state can use that money because an electricity shut-off would prompt caseworkers to consider removing children from a home, she said.

People who want to apply for funding from that program will be considered on a first-come-first-serve basis, Udow said. That could mean trouble, particularly for low-income senior citizens, if 90-degree days continue next month.

Department of Human Services' branch offices across the state also have some money left to help people avoid shutoffs, Udow said. She also encouraged people who need help with their energy bills to consider contacting nonprofit organizations.

Kathleen Walgren, executive director of The Heat and Warmth Fund, or THAW, said she is worried about senior citizens getting through the rest of the summer if they are not able to be in air conditioning. But she said she also is concerned about what could happen in the fall.

"Utility companies do an audit and inspect where service is off and they step up shutoffs at that time to get people to do something about their bill before the cold weather starts," she said. "They do a lot of shutoffs in October."

Difficulties for the program don't end when the new fiscal year starts this fall. The federal budget proposal for the upcoming fiscal year includes \$31 million less for the program than it did in 1986, Udow said.

Michigan's Sex Offender Registry aims for more accuracy

Bay City Times editorial

Thursday, July 21, 2005

The Michigan Public Sex Offender Registry isn't all it's cracked up to be, an auditors' report said this month. The registry that is available to the public and a special police registry often don't match, and the Michigan State Police didn't have procedures to verify the accuracy of addresses and names of sex offenders between October 2001 and August 2004, according to the report. That's not too surprising, after learning that just two people were assigned to manage the state's sex offender records.

Responding to the Office of the Auditor General's report, state police officials have said they'll put two more people on the records detail. State police also noted that the records are 97 percent accurate. That's quite good, actually, considering that, in Michigan, those convicted of sex crimes are responsible for reporting their addresses to the state police. Sometimes, they don't tell the truth, so their stories must be checked.

The public registry is getting better. The online database is adding photos of offenders, and searching it may get easier. It also will be linked soon to a nationwide network of similar databases in other states. This information is supposed to make it easier for people to track the whereabouts of sex offenders. And that should make us feel safer. Provided the registry doesn't violate the cardinal rule of the computerized Information Age: Garbage in, garbage out.

- Our View is the editorial opinion of The Bay City Times, as determined by the newspaper's editorial board, which includes the editorial page editor, the editor and the publisher.

Christian adoption group allows Catholics to adopt

Thursday, July 21, 2005

By Ed Ronco

Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- The Mississippi office of a West Michigan-based Christian adoption agency has changed its policy and will allow Catholic families to adopt. Earlier this month, the Mississippi branch of Bethany Christian Services rejected an adoption request by the Stedman family of Jackson, Miss., saying their Catholic faith conflicted with the organization's "Statement of Faith."

But on Tuesday, the Board of Directors for Bethany's Mississippi operation voted unanimously to include Catholic families in its programs. Bethany, in operation since 1944, is based on Grand Rapids' Northeast Side.

All families who wish to adopt must sign a statement agreeing to its beliefs. But each of its 32 state operations are independent subsidiaries, so the national office allows "some discretion on some issues," President and CEO Glenn De Mots said last week.

The meeting in Mississippi came after Bethany's national board met earlier in the day in Grand Rapids. At that meeting, national officials said all Bethany offices would comply with the practice of allowing Catholic families to adopt.

The national board's statement was conveyed to Mississippi, but that state's board probably would have reached the same decision with or without input from Grand Rapids, De Mots said Wednesday.

"We are sorry for offending families and all partners of Bethany, and regret any pain and hurt caused by this issue," he said in a statement.

While Mary Haarman, spokesperson for the Diocese of Grand Rapids, didn't say if West Michigan's Catholic leaders were troubled by the original Mississippi policy, she said they "appreciate the immediacy" Bethany took in addressing the issue.

Last year, 16 percent of Bethany's adoptions nationwide were with Catholic families. The Stedmans, of Jackson, Miss., who expressed disappointment when denied last week, said in a statement they were pleased with their local board's decision.

"Bethany does admirable work, and we can now be supportive of this pro-life ministry," Robert Stedman said.

Father going to trial in abuse of infant son

THE FLINT JOURNAL

Thursday, July 21, 2005

By Paul Janczewski

A Flint man who said he "popped" his 5-week-old son, then threw the infant on the floor and caused head injuries, will stand trial on a child abuse charge. Police and prosecutors also are looking into possible abuse charges of another child several years ago based on a statement that Carleton O. Grant gave to police.

Grant, 24, of Flint, faces an Aug. 1 circuit court arraignment on first-degree child abuse, a 15-year felony, after a preliminary examination Wednesday before Flint District Judge Michael D. McAra. Flint Police Sgt. Jowanne Carrigan testified she arrested Grant at his E. Gillespie Street residence after his son, Jacarion, was admitted July 4 to Hurley Medical Center in critical condition.

Carrigan said the infant had a swollen face, bleeding on his brain, a fractured wrist and six fractured ribs. Grant, an unemployed high school dropout, told Carrigan he has a "problem with his anger" and "went too far this time" with Jacarion, she said.

Grant showed Carrigan how he held the child, shook him, slapped him in the head several times and raked his fingernails across the boy's face, causing scratches. Grant said he threw a baby bottle at the child, hitting him in the head, and demonstrated how he threw the infant down on a couch, Carrigan said.

He also told Carrigan about shaken-baby syndrome and told her Jacarion is the second of his four children that he has abused in such a manner. Police and prosecutors are investigating that earlier case, which allegedly occurred several years ago.

Grant and the child's mother, Chanel McMillian, 20, had four children, including Jacarion. Protective Services has removed all four children from the couple, who are involved in Probate Court proceedings with neglect and loss of parental rights, according to testimony and court records.

McMillian testified that the couple argued late on July 3 before and after she went to a hair appointment. She said Grant would not let her take Jacarion from the home until the next day, when she took him to the hospital. The infant was released from the hospital about a week later, police said. Before he was arrested, Grant wanted her to give him money so he could flee to Atlanta, McMillian said. Grant is being held in the Genesee County jail on a \$100,000 cash bond.

Social-agency chief retiring after 37 years aiding families

Thursday, July 21, 2005

By Dave Person

Kalamazoo Gazette

When he steps down as chief executive officer of Family & Children Services in October, Donald Vander Kooy will look back at his long career with no regrets. "What drives me and what drives our staff is the mission of the agency, that we can become a part of people's lives and ... be a source of hope for them," said Vander Kooy, 65. He announced his retirement Wednesday after 37 years at the helm of Family & Children Services and its predecessor, the Kalamazoo branch of the Michigan Children's Aid Society.

The local Children's Aid Society, which Vander Kooy had led since 1968, merged with the Family Service Center in 1971 to form Family & Children Services. The agency provides a large variety of services, including foster care, adoption, pregnancy counseling, an outpatient-counseling center and circuit-court services. At the same time that Vander Kooy's retirement plans became public, Craig Lubben, president of the Family & Children Services board of directors, announced his successor.

Alan E. Brown, who began his career here with Family & Children Services, will replace Vander Kooy as CEO on Oct. 17. Brown is executive director of Child & Family Services of Northeast Michigan, in Alpena.

"He began his career with Family & Children Services over 25 years ago and comes back to us now having excellent experience with an agency similar in programs and funding," Lubben said. "I think he's a great choice for the agency," Vander Kooy said.

Lubben praised Vander Kooy for his leadership over the years.

"Don has been a steady hand at the helm of Family & Children Services and has significantly contributed to the continued success of the private agency as a preferred provider in delivery of quality human services," Lubben said. "The Kalamazoo community is a better place because of his stewardship of the agency."

Family & Children Services went from a staff of 15 and a budget of \$200,000 when Vander Kooy was named executive director in 1971 to a current operating budget of nearly \$8 million and a staff of more than 250. Services also have been greatly expanded. Brown, meanwhile, has been executive director of Child & Family Services of Northeast Michigan for the past 20 years. He is credited with expanding the services of the Alpena agency to nine counties and with expanding funding to seven community United Way agencies.

A Boston native, Brown received a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts, a master's degree in social work and specialty certification in alcohol and drug abuse from Western Michigan University and post-master's certification in management and administration from the University of Michigan.

He was a family therapist during his first stint at Family & Children Services, from 1974 to 1979.

He was named community-mental-health director in St. Joseph County in 1979 and later had a private counseling practice in Kalamazoo before moving to Alpena in 1985. Family & Children Services has offices in Kalamazoo, Barry and Calhoun counties and serves nearly 8,500 clients annually, including more than 4,400 children.

Delinquent parents warned

County prosecutor will send letters to those who are behind on child support; prison time could follow.

By Steve Pardo / The Detroit News

HOWELL -- If you owe thousands of dollars or more in back child support payments and receive a letter from the Livingston County Prosecutor's office within the next two weeks, don't throw it away.

Livingston County Prosecutor David Morse will send letters to about 120 parents who are seriously behind in their child support payments. If those receiving the letters don't come into the county's Friend of the Court offices and arrange payment, they could face a felony charge and go to prison for up to four years.

"Our goal is not to put people into prison but to help the families," said Melissa Scharrer of the Livingston County Friend of the Court. "We would just as soon not have to go through with the criminal charges."

Morse and Scharrer believe the warning letters are a way to show people delinquent in their payments that the county is serious in getting money to those owed. The 120 people identified by the prosecutor's office owe more than \$1.6 million, Morse said.

The letter campaign mirrors a "fair warning" campaign conducted last year when Morse's office sent out about 100 letters to some of the county's top delinquent parents. That campaign netted \$56,000 for families, Morse said.

"We felt that getting \$56,000 back for the cost of a stamp was really a good return on our investment," Morse said.

In addition, the 2004 campaign also resulted in 20 people being charged -- 12 of whom have been convicted on sentences of up to 18 months in prison, Morse said.

"We aren't really looking to increase the number of prosecutions; we've got plenty to keep us busy," Morse said.

Typically, if a person is brought in for failing to pay child support, he or she is charged with contempt of court. But that charge only carries a penalty of up to 45 days in jail on a first offense and up to 90 days in jail on subsequent charges. The possibility of charging people with a felony, where they could face prison time, is more effective in getting people to begin the process of paying what they owe, Morse said. Those who could face prosecution if they don't make an effort to pay what they owe won't necessarily be limited to those that owe the most.

"Anyone who is sent a letter could be subjected to prosecution," he said.

In the mail

The Livingston County Prosecutor's Office will send out letters within two weeks to county residents who owe more than \$5,000 in child support payments. Those that don't make efforts to pay could be charged with a felony. For information on making payments, call the Friend of the Court at (517) 546-0230.

The Friend of the Court has a caseload of about 7,100 families, Scharrer said. About 75 percent of those cases involve people who consistently pay what they owe, she said. A portion of the remaining 25 percent is incarcerated, or otherwise unable to pay. Morse said his office is going after those who are unwilling to live up to their obligations -- those that "thumb their nose at the system."

"Fifteen to 20 percent are just irresponsible and choosing not to support their kids. It's unacceptable."

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Divorce-related insurance for children

Gongwer News Service

July 20, 2005

Divorce agreements that require either or both parents to name their children on life insurance policies is not limited to fulfilling child support obligations, another panel of the court ruled. The ruling (*In re estate of William Robert Lobaina*, COA docket No. 260866) is directly at odds with a 1983 Court of Appeals decision which found the life insurance requirements in divorce agreements are intended to serve as a means to guarantee child support will be met until the children reach adulthood.

The court said the application of the life insurance requirement to both parties, rather than just to the one responsible for child support payments, is one indication that the insurance was not intended solely to meet the support obligations. And Judges David Sawyer, William Murphy and Pat Donofrio added, "If the parties' only intent was to ensure the security of the future child support payments, the provision would have required, regardless of source, that Lobaina maintain sufficient life insurance to achieve that goal."

Funding structure changed for Collaborative Council

by Erica Goff
Herald Staff Writer

The funding structure for the Gratiot County Collaborative Council was recently altered by the state.

"At the state level they are trying to develop consistency for how funding is being distributed. It has not been done the same from county to county," said Bill Dilts, prevention coordinator for the Collaborative Council.

The main source of revenue for county councils was a group called Strong Families Safe Children (SFSC), a Lansing-based affiliate of the Department of Human Services (DHS) that distributed monies to counties based on outcomes met in four specific categories. The categories are Family Support, Family Preservation, Family Reunification and Adoptive Support. Administration costs are also included in the SFSC budget.

The funding received by each county was then distributed to local agencies according to standards set by the Collaborative Council. As the coordinator, Dilts was in charge of working with the executive committee in the development of a business plan for distribution, which was then submitted to SFSC.

The change has put more control in the hands of DHS, said Jan Baszler, director the Gratiot and Clinton DHS offices. Funding for the council now runs through DHS, and is part of the organization's business plan, eliminating the business plan developed by Dilts and the council.

Dilts said that change will force counties to be consistent.

"It is making all local offices follow the business plan, which is developed at the state level, establishing consistency. The intent in Gratiot and Clinton counties is to follow up on the business plan and keep funds active here," he said.

Baszler said it is a "significant change" in procedure. She added that Dilts' position will remain vital, as will the council, although their roles will be slightly different.

"Bill (Dilts) will still negotiate problems and oversee activities. This also puts the Collaborative in the driver's seat to establish outcomes for the community," she explained.

Each agency involved will have to offer "intensive programs that specifically meet goals" of the state in order to receive funding, Baszler added.

Dilts said because funding is now conducted through DHS, those are the programs that will receive funds. Part of the change involves redefining "at risk" clients, which are those who are at a high risk of being removed from their homes or are in families that are at risk of being separated. All cases must be referred by DHS.

The change will leave the council with \$117,000 to spread throughout the county in 2005-06 and focus must be narrowed.

"Any other program not in DHS might be at risk but it is not as high. Once this money is spread out it can get pretty thin," Dilts said.

The state has mandated that programs be "at risk eminent" to receive funding. Three outcomes have been identified to be the focus for this upcoming year - in-

crease the number of children who remain in the safety of their homes, decrease the lengths children spend outside their homes once removed and increase the number of children who achieve permanency once placed in a home will receive state funding.

Although some programs will be cut from this state resource, they are ones that have other options for funding, he explained. Many can turn to United Way, for example, and there are other community resources that need to be tapped.

"The community will have to pick up the weight and burden of these programs," Dilts said.

Dilts did not wish to discuss specific names of the programs at this time because it is important for the community to support services such as United Way that can help with these funding issues.

"There are 18,000 employed people in this county. If everyone gave \$1 a week, that would make \$936,000 available for United Way to contribute to some really important programs," he said. "That is nearly three times what the United Way annual budget is now."

The new funding structure for the Collaborative is similar to the one used by United Way and other community entities.

Dilts said the idea behind the plan, in combination with increased community support, is to develop a more effective way of spreading funds where they need to go. He said opportunities exist through local fund raising for federal and state government agencies to match funds raised here.

United Way is a good place to

Dilts said the structure change would not cause critical stress to

Local teams grab
all the HEADLINES
in the
Grafiot County Herald

Michigan Works back in service

Temporary facility at former city school to offer full services

By Kevin Grasha

Lansing State Journal

Capital Area Michigan Works officials announced Wednesday that they will open a full-service, temporary facility today in the northwest wing of the former Walter French Academy building. The center roof section of its offices at 2110 S. Cedar St. collapsed June 25, a Saturday morning when the building was empty.

"We're used to serving 500 to 600 people a day, and we're ready to get back in business," said Capital Area Michigan Works' chief executive officer, Doug Stites, speaking at a news conference Wednesday in what used to be Walter French Academy's band room.

Since the collapse, the agency had been offering limited employment services at the former charter school. For more comprehensive help, people had to go to service centers in St. Johns and Charlotte. Capital Area Michigan Works helps people with job search, job placement and training.

Stites said they expect to use the temporary offices until the about 7,500-square-foot center section is rebuilt. Work is expected to begin this week. It is expected to reopen in early 2006. Investigators haven't determined the cause of the collapse.

"There's not any single issue - no smoking gun," said Mark Clouse, a spokesman for Eyde Co., which owns the building. "It looks like there may have been several things that contributed to it." An official from a local carpenter's union said earlier this month that shoddy carpentry by laborers who did not have adequate training could be to blame.

He also said the building's north and south wings, which the Eyde Co. will not rebuild, might be dangerous. Clouse rejected that claim.

"The center section was built independently of the two other areas." He described it as having "an extreme vaulted ceiling," wide open, with no walls or posts for support. "The truss system in the north and south ends the building are completely different."

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State's jobless picture brighter

But 6.8% is more than nation's 5%

July 21, 2005

BY JOHN GALLAGHER

FREE PRESS BUSINESS WRITER

Modest improvement in the state's jobs market in June gave hope of more improvement to come, even as Michigan's unemployment rate remained high relative to the nation's.

The state reported a June jobless rate of 6.8%, down from May's rate of 7.1% but still well above the national rate for June of 5.0%.

"I think there's a potentially encouraging improvement in the labor market," said Dana Johnson, senior economist for Comerica Inc. in Detroit. "It's small, and the numbers bounce around from month to month, but it looks like maybe things are heading in the right direction."

Among the positive indicators, Michigan's June jobless rate was the lowest for the state since the April 2004 rate of 6.7%. And June's total statewide unemployment total of 345,000 was the lowest monthly level so far in 2005, according to the state's Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

"Job gains in both professional and health services led to the reduction in the jobless rate," said Richard Waclawek, director of DLEG's Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives. "However, fewer young people sought summer employment in Michigan than what is typically expected."

Even with the improvement, Michigan is likely to post one of the highest jobless rates in the nation for June. As of May, Michigan was tied with Mississippi for the worst state rate at 7.1%. The federal government is to release a compilation of state rates for June later this month. Economists follow two monthly surveys of the labor market, one of households and one of companies. The company survey in June showed that Michigan added 5,000 payroll jobs for a total of 4.37 million.

Job gains over the month were recorded in professional and business services (up 8,000 jobs), education and health services (up 6,000) and in trade, transportation and utilities (up 4,000). Somewhat offsetting these increases were job losses in manufacturing. The state's factories shed another 9,000 jobs in June, almost all of them from automotive plants.

Economists say the most recent recession ended officially in late 2001. So the nation as a whole has been in an economic recovery for more than three years at this point. The sense that Michigan remains behind the nation's economic curve has worried economists and business leaders.

"The data don't change the sense that we're not performing as strongly as the nation is," Johnson said. "It's not like we're catching up, but I think there's some hope there that we're beginning to move in the right direction."

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Granholm appoints Webb Sharpe new director of Management and Budget

July 20, 2005

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm today announced the appointment of Lisa Webb Sharpe, 41, to serve as director of the Department of Management and Budget (DMB). Webb Sharpe is currently the Cabinet secretary and public policy director in the Governor's office. "Lisa Webb Sharpe has been instrumental in the work that the Department of Management and Budget has already done to streamline state government, save taxpayer dollars, and increase efficiency," said Granholm. "She is a great leader who is committed to excellence and integrity, and I know she will build on DMB's mission of great service for citizens and state departments." During her tenure as Cabinet secretary, Webb Sharpe developed and implemented the Cabinet Action Plan which was a factor in Michigan being named one of the best managed states in the nation by Governing magazine.

Webb Sharpe holds a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree in Personnel and Industrial Relations from Eastern Michigan University and a Master of Business Administration Degree in International Business from Wayne State University. Prior to joining the Granholm Administration, she worked at The Traverse Group in Ann Arbor as director of Housing Services and spent eight years in Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer's Administration. She and her husband, Felix Sharpe, live in Okemos with their daughter.

Webb Sharpe will replace out-going DMB Director Mitch Irwin who was recently named director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Webb Sharpe will be the first African American to serve as DMB director. She is scheduled to begin her duties on August 1.

The appointment is subject to disapproval by the Michigan State Senate.

Granholtm announces nearly \$17 million to accelerate health care training, move people into workforce

July 20, 2005

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholtm today announced that 13 Michigan universities and community colleges will receive over \$17 million in grants to accelerate training for nurses and other health care professionals. The grants, which are part of the Governor's MI Opportunity Partnership, are expected to train over 1,200 health professionals, including RNs, LPNs, clinical nurse faculty, and allied health professionals such as respiratory therapists and pharmacy technicians.

"The goal of MI Opportunity Partnership is to get people working now," said Granholtm. "These grants will enable our universities and community colleges to meet the demand for high-skilled health care workers quicker and help ensure that people wanting to work in this growing field can get the training they need."

MI Opportunity Partnership was unveiled in the Governor's 2005 State of the State. The program, designed to proactively steer unemployed workers into high-demand career fields, including health care, set a goal of matching 30,000 unemployed workers with jobs by the end of the year. In May, the MI Opportunity Partnership pledge drive began and already over 14,000 job vacancies have been committed.

Granholtm made the announcement today at Mott Community College in Flint, which is one of the institutions receiving funding. Mott will partner with Genesys Regional Medical Center to train 83 RNs and other health professionals with a grant of approximately \$3 million. A full list of grant recipients is attached.

"Our chief nurse hears constantly from frustrated students who have completed classes but can't get needed clinical experience or who are struggling to get into health care programs at all," said Department of Community Health Director Janet Olszewski. "Thanks to collaborative efforts like Mott Community College and Genesys Health System, these grants will help ensure that we are training and employing people quickly."

Community colleges and public universities attached to Michigan Regional Skills Alliances that have partnered with hospitals were invited in April to submit proposals to apply for the funds.

The grant proposals were reviewed by a team from the departments of Labor & Economic Growth (DLEG) and Community Health (DCH). In total, 21 grants were made to 13 different community college and universities. The grants are being made available with Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) funds.

The MI Opportunity Partnership specifically targets the health care industry because of the need for skilled workers and the existing vacancies. According to a recent study released jointly by

DLEG and the DCH, the state will need to fill more than 100,000 professional and technical health care jobs in Michigan over the next decade.

“Michigan has people out of work and an industry in need of workers,” DLEG Director David C. Hollister said. “Thanks to the MI Opportunity Partnership and these grants, we can match those needs, meet the growing labor demands of the health care industry, and put people to work without compromising quality.”